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AT SEATTLE  
CLERK U.S. DISTRICT COURT  
WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON  
BY DEPUTY

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE  
WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON  
AT SEATTLE

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

NO. MJ18-456

Plaintiff,

V.

## COMPLAINT FOR VIOLATIONS

KELED ALI,

Defendant.

BEFORE, United States Magistrate Judge, James P. Donohue, Seattle, Washington.

The undersigned complainant, Earl A. Wozniak, Special Agent, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (“ATF”), being duly sworn states:

## **COUNT 1**

## **(Possession of a Firearm in Furtherance of a Drug Trafficking Crime)**

On or about December 8, 2018, at Seattle, within the Western District of Washington, KELED ALI knowingly possessed a firearm, that is, a Smith & Wesson M&P Shield 9mm semi-automatic pistol, bearing serial number HV25087, in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime for which he may be prosecuted in a court of the United States, namely, Maintaining a Drug Involved Premises and Possession of Marijuana with Intent to Distribute, as alleged below in Count 2 and Count 3.

All in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 924(c)(1)(A)(i).

## COUNT 2

(Maintaining a Drug Involved Premises)

Beginning in or before October 2017, and continuing through on or about March 8, 2018, at Seattle, within the Western District of Washington, KELED ALI knowingly used, maintained, and leased a place, that is, commercial space located at 5303 Rainier Avenue South, Seattle, Washington, for the purpose distributing marijuana, a substance controlled under Schedule I, Title 21, United States Code, Section 812.

All in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Section 856(a)(1) and (b).

**COUNT 3**  
**(Possession of Marijuana with Intent to Distribute)**

On or about March 8, 2018, at Seattle, within the Western District of Washington, KELED ALI knowingly and intentionally possessed, with intent to distribute, marijuana, a substance controlled under Schedule I, Title 21, United States Code, Section 812.

All in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Sections 841(a)(1), 841(b)(1)(D), and Title 18, United States Code, Section 2.

And the complainant further states:

## **AFFIANT'S BACKGROUND**

I am a Special Agent (SA) with the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco Firearms and Explosives (ATF) and have been so employed since September 1, 2013. I am currently assigned to the Seattle, Washington Field Office.

I am a graduate of the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, where I completed ATF Special Agent Basic Training and the Criminal Investigator Training Program. Prior to my employment with ATF, I was a Police Officer with the Dallas Police Department, in Dallas, Texas, for three years. I am a graduate of Marquette University where I received a Bachelor of Science in Accounting in 2010. I have received training in the recognition, identification and testing of controlled substances as well as in common methods of trafficking in narcotics. I have participated in surveillance and interdiction operations at known drug locations and have made numerous arrests for

1 drug related crimes. I have further received training in firearms trafficking and the  
2 diversion of legal firearms for unlawful purposes, participated in the investigation of  
3 many crimes of violence, including robberies, assaults, and homicides, and made  
4 numerous arrests for firearms and violent offenses. As a result of my training and  
5 experience, I have an understanding of the manner in which narcotics are distributed and  
6 various roles played by individuals or groups involved in the distribution, along with the  
7 unlawful use of firearms during crimes of violence and/or drug trafficking and firearms  
8 trafficking.

9 The facts in this affidavit come from my training and experience, and information  
10 obtained from other agents, detectives, analysts, and witnesses. The information outlined  
11 below is provided for the limited purpose of establishing probable cause and does not  
12 contain all details or all facts of which I am aware related to this investigation.

13 **STATEMENT OF PROBABLE CAUSE**

14 **A. The One Stop Marijuana Dispensary.**

15 The One Stop marijuana dispensary, located at 5303 Rainier Avenue South,  
16 Seattle, is an illegal, unlicensed marijuana business that was operated by the defendant,  
17 Keled Ali. The ATF and the Seattle Police Department ("SPD") became familiar with  
18 the One Stop business because it has been the locus of and/or related to multiple gang-  
19 related crimes of violence over the past two years, including a homicide in  
20 December 2017 and a drive-by shooting in March 2018. Because of the violence  
21 surrounding the One Stop business, the ATF and SPD conducted further investigation of  
22 the business and its operators.

23 On October 28, 2017, an undercover SPD detective ("UC") entered One Stop.  
24 The UC smelled the strong odor of marijuana and observed a member's sign-in sheet that  
25 was blank. A black male told the UC that he had to be a "member" to enter the store, and  
26 that in order to become a member, a current "documented" member had to vouch for him.  
27 The UC then left the store.

1 On December 8, 2017, a customer of One Stop was murdered shortly after he  
2 visited the store. The customer, a known gang member, went to One Stop and purchased  
3 marijuana at the business. On his way out of the store, rival gang members observed him  
4 and followed the customer as he drove away from the business down Rainier Avenue  
5 South. The rival gang members fired multiple shots into the customer's car, killing him.  
6 The perpetrator of this murder has been charged with Murder in the King County  
7 Superior Court.

8 As part of the investigation of this murder, SPD detectives visited One Stop and  
9 requested to review any relevant surveillance video footage. Initially, the detectives were  
10 denied entry into the store, but ultimately the individuals inside the business (all of whom  
11 refused to provide their names) allowed the detectives inside and provided the detectives  
12 with video footage from December 8 and 13, 2017. In turn, the SPD detectives provided  
13 me with a copy of the footage.

14 A review of the surveillance footage shows numerous individuals entering the  
15 store and approaching the counter. Several large glass jars containing what appears to be  
16 marijuana sit on the counter. The people working at the store can be seen providing the  
17 customers with quantities of marijuana over the counter, and collecting money from the  
18 customers. The store employees appear to weigh the marijuana before placing it into  
19 small plastic sandwich bags and handing them to the customers, who then exit the store.  
20 The footage shows an individual I believe to be the defendant, Keled Ali, selling  
21 marijuana to customers by weighing it, bagging it in a clear plastic baggie, and accepting  
22 money for the marijuana.

23 On January 26, 2018, ATF Special Agent Hunt ("SA Hunt"), operating in an  
24 undercover capacity, entered One Stop. SA Hunt observed a member's sign in sheet in  
25 the small entry lounge area. The main store area was located through a second, locked  
26 door. Two black males met SA Hunt at the locked door. SA Hunt told them he was  
27 looking to purchase marijuana. SA Hunt could smell the strong and distinct odor of  
28 marijuana in the store. The black males denied SA Hunt's request to purchase marijuana

1 because SA Hunt was not a member. The males at the store told SA Hunt that he had to  
 2 have a member of the club vouch for him in order to get his own membership before they  
 3 would sell marijuana to him. SA Hunt said he would come back with a member and  
 4 exited the store.

5 On January 29, 2018, ATF Special Agent Roberts (“SA Roberts”), operating in an  
 6 undercover capacity, entered One Stop. The second, locked door to the main business  
 7 area was open. SA Roberts saw a black male working at the business and asked to speak  
 8 with the manager. The male pointed to the couch in the waiting area, suggesting that  
 9 SA Roberts sit and wait for the manager’s arrival. The male quickly closed the open  
 10 door. Shortly thereafter, Keled Ali entered the room and spoke with SA Roberts. Ali  
 11 introduced himself as “Lee” and confirmed he was the manager of the business.  
 12 SA Roberts asked Ali if he could enter the business and purchase a quarter-ounce of  
 13 marijuana. Ali said he would not allow SA Roberts to enter the sales floor until he  
 14 became a “member.” SA Roberts informed Ali that a friend of his told him he could  
 15 come to the shop to purchase marijuana. Ali reiterated that SA Roberts had to be a  
 16 member to purchase marijuana at the store. Ali said that once SA Robert’s friend  
 17 vouched for him, he would allow SA Roberts to sign up as a member of the dispensary.  
 18 Ali suggested that SA Roberts bring his friend to the dispensary on a Saturday to  
 19 complete the membership process. SA Roberts then exited the business.

20 On February 8, 2018, law enforcement officers conducted physical surveillance at  
 21 One Stop. Approximately 30 vehicles came and went from the store. The drivers and/or  
 22 passengers of these vehicles entered the store and exited within approximately five  
 23 minutes, and then departed the area. Based upon my training and experience, this sort of  
 24 high volume, short-stay traffic in an area associated with drug dealing is indicative of  
 25 narcotics transactions. Many of the individuals who were identified entering the store  
 26 had lengthy and violent criminal histories.

27 SPD officers conducted a traffic stop of one of the customers who exited One Stop  
 28 on February 8, 2018, because he was driving with a suspended license. This individual

1 told the officers that he had just purchased marijuana at One Stop, and showed the  
 2 marijuana to the officers. It was contained in a clear plastic sandwich bag. The customer  
 3 further stated that he knows One Stop to be an ongoing marijuana dispensary business.

4 On multiple other days during February 2018, ATF agents conducted physical  
 5 surveillance at One Stop and made observations similar to those described above with  
 6 respect to the activities of February 8, 2017.

7 On February 21, 2018, agents observed Cooperating Source 5 (“CS-5”) arrive at  
 8 One Stop as the passenger in a vehicle.<sup>1</sup> CS-5 was observed entering and then leaving  
 9 One Stop five minutes later. He reentered the vehicle and it drove away. Police officers  
 10 stopped the vehicle to make contact with the driver, who had an outstanding arrest  
 11 warrant. Officers spoke with CS-5, who stated that One Stop is a marijuana dispensary  
 12 and he had just purchased marijuana at the store. CS-5 showed the officers the  
 13 marijuana, and stated that the individuals who operated One Stop sold it to him. The  
 14 marijuana was packaged in clear plastic baggies. CS-5 told the officers that in order to  
 15 purchase marijuana at One Stop, a customer either has to know one of the employees or  
 16 have someone vouch for him. CS-5 further stated that he had seen a pistol and a rifle  
 17 inside of One Stop.

18 On March 6, 2018, individuals at the dispensary, believed to be customers, were  
 19 targeted in a drive-by shooting which resulted in numerous rounds being fired into the  
 20 adjoining business suite, which is an immigration support service organization.

21 I have confirmed with the Seattle Police Department, the Seattle City Attorney’s  
 22 Office, and the Washington State Liquor and Cannabis Board that One Stop is not  
 23 licensed to sell marijuana under the applicable state and local ordinances. Specifically,  
 24 although Washington State law requires a license be obtained in order to legally  
 25 distribute marijuana, neither One Stop nor anyone associated with the business, including

26  
 27 <sup>1</sup> CS-5 has criminal convictions for Robbery in the Second Degree (two counts), Attempted Robbery, and  
 28 Manufacture/Delivery of a Controlled Substance (two counts) and is cooperating with law enforcement for financial  
 compensation and consideration on a potential pending criminal charge that has not yet been filed (Unlawful  
 Possession of a Firearm).

1 Keled Ali, has a license to distribute or grow marijuana. As a result, One Stop is  
2 operating unlawfully under all applicable federal, State, and local laws.

3 **B. Search of the One Stop Marijuana Dispensary on March 8, 2018.**

4 On March 5, 2018, the Honorable United States Magistrate Judge Brian A.  
5 Tsuchida issued a search warrant for the premises of One Stop, authorizing the seizure of  
6 evidence related to the offense of Distribution of Marijuana, in violation of Title 21,  
7 United States Code, Section 841. The warrant was executed on March 8, 2018.

8 Agents observed Keled Ali arrive at the store in the morning. Another black male  
9 let Ali inside of the store. Both Ali and this other person were contacted by law  
10 enforcement officers and placed into custody. The other person had a loaded firearm on  
11 his person.

12 Agents then conducted a search of the store. Agents located a safe inside of the  
13 employee lounge area of the store. Ali identified himself as the "owner" of the store and  
14 provided agents with the combination to the safe. Inside of the safe, agents found a  
15 Smith & Wesson M&P Shield 9mm semi-automatic pistol, bearing serial number  
16 HV25087, two .45 caliber magazines, and multiple rounds of 9mm and .45 caliber  
17 ammunition. Agents also recovered a total of approximately 3.2 pounds of marijuana in  
18 various jars and bags located throughout the store.

19 **C. Interview of Keled Ali on March 8, 2018.**

20 Keled Ali was transported to SPD headquarters for an interview. Ali was read his  
21 *Miranda* rights, waived those rights, and agreed to speak with agents. During the  
22 interview, Ali made the following statements, among others:

23 • Ali stated he is the owner, operator, and sole employee of One Stop. Ali  
24 stated he is subletting the premises from another person.

25 • Ali identified the other person arrested at the store (who possessed the  
26 firearm) as a "friend" but not an employee of the store. Ali stated the friend  
27 watches the store sometimes in exchange for marijuana.

1     • Ali stated the shop is a “compassion club” that distributes marijuana to  
2     “members.” Ali said the business is funded by member “donations.”  
3     According to Ali, the members are permitted to take “however much  
4     [marijuana] they’re comfortable with” in exchange for their donation.  
5     However, Ali acknowledged that a customer would not be permitted to take  
6     a pound of marijuana with only a \$20 donation, and he generally agreed  
7     that there was a relationship between the amount of marijuana provided and  
8     the size of the monetary “donation.”

9     • Ali denied having any knowledge of firearms in the store, and said  
10    someone else must have left any firearms that were recovered. Ali admitted  
11    he was the only person who had access to the safe containing the Smith and  
12    Wesson pistol, and provided the combination to law enforcement officers at  
13    the scene, which was used to open the safe. Agents clarified a second time  
14    during the interview that only Ali had access to the safe, which Ali  
15    confirmed. Ali also stated during the interview that customers were not  
16    permitted in the lounge area where the safe was stored.

17    • Ali claimed he was generally the only person who sold marijuana at the  
18    store, but stated that there was a close circle of his friends who were  
19    allowed to hang out at the shop and provide marijuana to customers if Ali  
20    was busy.

21    • Ali acknowledged having some concern about the shop being robbed, but  
22    he denied anyone was at the store for security reasons or that anyone was  
23    armed for that reason.

24    • Ali said he generally pays \$1,400 per pound for marijuana, and sells it for  
25    \$2,200. Ali initially stated he sold about one pound per day, but then said it  
26    was closer to one-half pound per day. Ali claimed all of the money went  
27    towards his rent of \$2,100 per month and/or was reinvested into the store.

28

1           • Ali admitted that he intentionally did not register his store with the State of  
 2           Washington or seek the requisite license to sell marijuana because he did  
 3           not want to be taxed or regulated.

4           An analysis of the information Ali provided indicates that One Stop was an  
 5           extremely profitable business. Ali has stated that on a busy day, One Stop sells  
 6           marijuana to 200-275 customers. According to Ali, he sold marijuana for \$2,200 per  
 7           pound, which translates to \$34.00 per quarter ounce. Using these prices, an estimate of  
 8           the store's revenue for the period beginning on October 28, 2017 (when the SPD UC  
 9           visited One Stop), and continuing through the date of the search warrant on March 8,  
 10           2018, would be as follows:

Number of Customers	x	Price per 1/4 ounce	=	Daily Gross Revenue	x	130 Days of Operation Revenue
50	x	\$ 34.00	=	\$ 1,700.00	x	\$ 221,000.00
100	x	\$ 34.00	=	\$ 3,400.00	x	\$ 442,000.00
150	x	\$ 34.00	=	\$ 5,100.00	x	\$ 663,000.00
200	x	\$ 34.00	=	\$ 6,800.00	x	\$ 884,000.00
275	x	\$ 34.00	=	\$ 9,350.00	x	\$ 1,215,500.00

14           In actuality, this revenue is likely substantially greater because the true market  
 15           value price per quarter ounce of marijuana is closer to \$70.00-\$120.00, according to open  
 16           source Google searches for quoted prices by legally operating marijuana dispensaries in  
 17           the Seattle area.

18           **D. Evidence Found on Keled Ali's Smartphone.**

19           During the execution of the search warrant on March 8, 2018, agents seized Ali's  
 20           smartphone and ultimately searched it pursuant to a federal search warrant. A review of  
 21           the phone's contents reveals that Ali was indeed the user of the phone. In numerous text  
 22           and other written communications, the user of the phone identifies himself as Keled Ali,  
 23           either by using his name (i.e., "this is Keled") or by providing an email address that  
 24           incorporates the name "Keled Ali."<sup>2</sup>

28           <sup>2</sup> On certain other occasions, it appears that the other person arrested at One Stop (in possession of the firearm) used  
 the phone and also identified himself by name when he did so.

1 A review of Ali's communications on the phone revealed numerous  
2 communications about him selling marijuana and running the One Stop business.  
3 Examples of these communications include:

- 4 • Ali frequently agrees to have people come to One Stop and sell them a  
5 specific quantity of marijuana. On multiple occasions, there are references  
6 to quantities of marijuana such as "grams," "ounces" and "pounds." On  
7 other occasions, Ali discusses selling a "P," which I know from training  
8 and experience often refers to a pound of marijuana, and "zips," which  
9 refers to ounces of marijuana.
- 10 • During one text conversation, Ali stated that One Stop had 700-800  
11 "members" and that on a busy day he serves 200-275 customers.
- 12 • In another text message, Ali stated that his store was robbed on December  
13 24, 2017, and said, "We'll find the guy."
- 14 • Some of Ali's communications discuss him selling marijuana to customers  
15 in other states, including shipping orders of marijuana to customers in New  
16 York, Philadelphia, and Atlanta. In one text message, Ali referenced an  
17 order for two ounces of marijuana from a customer in New York, but stated  
18 he only ships quantities of a quarter-pound or more.
- 19 • On August 27, 2017, during the following exchange of text messages with  
20 an unknown person referred to as "S," Ali discussed his operation of the  
21 One Stop business, including the profitability of the business and how he  
22 attempts to avoid undercover police officers.

23 **ALI:** I'm tryin open a 2nd one nd be majority owner of that one

24 S: How do you open one though without having a license? I'm still  
25 confused to your shop regulations lol

26 **ALI:** I own my name

27 **ALI:** This shop is best money I ever made but if I get another one that does  
28 almost good as this one it's high 6 figure talk

1 S: Good fuxkin shit!

2 S: Idk what owning your name means lol

3 **ALI:** Ur name is a business nd state of Washington owns it since u never  
4 claimed it..but trust me it's hard to text I'll tell u tonight we could chop it up  
5 on the phone but it's kinda deep..but basically I only follow federal law not  
state..the rec weed spots are federally illegal but medical marijuana isn't

6 S: Oh ok. So if like an undercover comes to your spot and you sell to them  
7 could you get in trouble?

8 **ALI:** If there under aged nd we don't "sell" we take donations nd u gotta  
9 have a membership were a private club so an undercover would have to be  
10 someone that knows one of us or one of our members nd finesse his way  
11 inside

12 **ALI:** We turn ppl away all day everyday literally lol some ppl still end up  
13 forcing it nd coming back wit ppl that have membership nd gettin on like  
that

14 S: Oh so if someone comes and you don't know them y'all just act like it's a  
15 smoke shop?

16 **ALI:** Naw tell them it's a private club nd need membership or ur medical  
17 card to come in..we just met wit a doctor couple days ago u really gotta  
18 keep this info to ur self nd don't mention it even gimme unless we alone lol  
19 but paid her 5k to give 100 ppl that come here there medical..we slowly  
20 gonna build files up so we could have proof ppl that come here have there  
21 medical nd eventually when we big enough nd have most our ppl wit there  
22 medical we really will enforce the rules nd turn ppl away that don't have  
23 there medical card nd operate like a real deal medical club.

24 These communications by Ali, and other similar communications found on his  
25 smartphone, illustrate that Ali knew his One Stop business was operating illegally, he  
26 knowingly distributed large quantities of marijuana at a substantial profit, and he took  
27 actions in an attempt to avoid law enforcement detection of, and to cover up, his illegal  
28 activities.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based upon the foregoing and my training and experience, I respectfully submit there is probable cause to believe that KELED ALI committed the offenses set forth above in this Complaint.

  
Earl A. Wozniak

Earl A. Wozniak  
Special Agent, ATF

Based on the Complaint and Affidavit sworn to before me, and subscribed in my presence this 1st day of October 2018, the Court hereby finds that there is probable cause to believe the defendant committed the offenses set forth in the Complaint.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
JAMES P. DONOHUE  
United States Magistrate Judge